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Message Text

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44
ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 RSC-01 SSO-00 ISO-00 /012 R

66605
DRAFTED BY: S/S-O: JSEGARS
APPROVED BY: S/S-O: RWRIGHT
---------- 099142
O 121300Z NOV 73 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 220414

TOSEC 217

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION AMMAN FROM SECSTATE NOV 08 ORIGINALLY
RECEIVED FROM TEL AVIV NOV 7 RPEATED YOU:

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 9028

E O 11652; GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IS
SUBJECT: UNCERTAIN STATE OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION
IN ISRAEL

1. ISRAELI PARLIAMENTARIANS, LIKE GENERAL PUBLI, REMAIN ANXIOUS
AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT GOVT'S ABILITY TO WITHSTAND WHAT THEY
SEE AS PROSPECTIVE US PRESSURESIN DAYS AHEAD, BUT CURRENT
INDICATIONS ARE THAT MEIR GOVT RETAINS STRENGTH TO CARRY
COALITION WITH IT IN KNESSET ON DIFFICULT DECISIONS WHICH IT
MAY HAVE TO TAKE IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. WHILE MRS MEIR IS UNDER
CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC PRESSURE TO SHOW THAT SHE HAS NOT
SIMPLY CAVED IN TO US DURING HER WASHINGTON TRIP, INFORMED
POLITICAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT MRS MEIR RETAINS CONFIDENCE
OF LABOR ALIGNMENT AND SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO MUSTER
SUPPORT OF NATIONAL RELIGIOUS AND INDEPENDENT LIBERAL COALITION
PARTNERS IN CRUNCH DECISIONS. SEVERAL KNESSET MEMBERS
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ENCOMPASSING BROAD SPECTRUM OF VIEWS WITH WHOM WE HAVE

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TALKED IN PAST TWO DAYS DO NOT ANTICIPATE GOVT CRISIS,
JIDGING BY THEIR CONTINUING FOCUS ON IMPACT OF PRESENT
SITUATION ON UPCOMING ELECTION ALMOST TWO MONTHS AWAY AND
NOT ON ANY IMMINENT BATTLES FOR VOTES IN KNESSET.

2. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT LEADERS OF AGGRESSIVE OPPOSITION LIKUD
BLOC, AFTER HEARING MRS MEIR'S REPORT ON HER WASHINGTON
TRIP IN CONFIDENTIAL SESSION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY
COMMITTEE NOV 6, THEN AGREED TO HER REQUEST FOR POST-
PONEMENT OF HER REPORT TO KNESSET FROM NOV 7 TO NOV 12.)8(7$-'S
AGREEMENT IN ALL LIKELIHOOD DOES NOT STEM FROM ANTICIPATION
THAT KISSINGER VISIT TO MID EAST LIKELY TO PRODUCE SIGNIFICANT
NEW DEVELOPMENTS FAVORABLE TO
ISRAEL. IT SEEMS RATHER TO HAVE BEEN COURTESY EXTENDED TO
HER PERSONALLY. NONETHLESS IT IS SIGN OF MRS MEIR'S
POLITICAL STRENGTH THAT IN PRESENT TENSE SITUATION SHE CAN
DEFER DISCUSSION OF HER WASHINGTON TRIP FOR A WEEK AFTER HER
RETURN WITH AGREEMENT OF OPPOSITION.

3. DESPITE ATMOSPHERE OF UNCERTAINTY AND ANXIETY, THERE ARE
ALSO A FEW SIGNS OF POTENTIAL FLEXIBILITY EMERGING ON ISRAELI
POLITICAL SCENE. ONE DEVELMRENT IS DE-EMPHASIS IN PUBLIC
STATEMENT BY RIGHT-WING ELEMENTS OF THEIR PAST EXTREMIST
POSITIONS OPPOSING ANY WITHDRAWAL FROM TERRITORIES, ALTHOUGH
THIS MAY ONLY BE TACICAL. ADDITIONALSIGN IS REEVAULTION OF
SEVERA HERETOFORE UNCONTROVERSIAL AXIOMS REGARDING GOI'S
PROSPECTIVE NEGOTIATING POSITION. SOME ISRAELIS ARE BEGINNING
FOR EXAMPLE TO QUESTON PUBLICLY WHETHER RETENTION OF SHARM-EL-
SHEIKH IS ABSOLUTELY INDISPENSABLE OR EVEN MEANINGFUL FOR
ISRAEL'S SECURITY IN VIEW OF ARAB ABILITY TO BLOCKADE BAB-EL-
MANDEB. NRP KNESSET MEMBER TOLD US THAT HIS FACTION WITHIN
NRP, WHICH IN PAST HAS BEEN HARDLINE ON SUCHISSUES, IS
RECEPTIVE TO IDA OF GOI-GOE NEGOTIATIONS OVER FUTURE OF
SINAI, INCLUDING DEMILITARIZATION, GOI ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF
EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER ENTIRE SINAI, AND ISRAELI RETENTION
OF CERTAIN AREAS FOR SPECIFIED NUMBER OF YEARS. MOREOVER,
HE BELIEVED THAT VIABLE SETTLEMENT WAS POSSIBLE IF SADAT WAS
NOT OVERWHELMED BY EXTREMIST ARAB PRESSURES RESULTING FOR
EXAMPLE FROM PAN-ARAB SUMMIT.

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4. COMMENT: AT THIS JUNCTURE, PUBLIC SEEEMS SLIGHTLY
SCHIZOPHRENIC, ON ONE HAND FEARFUL THAT GOI WILL BE TRICKED
INTO FATEFUL CONCESSIONS, AND ON OTHER HAND DESIRIOUS OF GIVING
NEGOTIATING PROSPECT A CHANCE RATHER THAN FACE FIFTH ARAB-
ISRAELI WAR IN NEXT SEVERAL YEARS. WHETHER SCALE WILL TIP IN
DIRECTION OF INWARD-TURNING, SULLEN INTRANSIGENCE OR OPENESS TO
NEGOTIATIONS REMAINS TO BE SEEN AND, AS SO MANY OTHER THINGS,
WILL BE LARGELY DETERMINED BY RESULTS OF SECRETARY'S

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CURRENT TRIP.
KEATING UNQTE
UNQUOTE RUSH

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NNN

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